

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

SUPPLEMENTARY INSPECTION NEW / ADDITIONAL PREMISES (Independent Higher Education)

INSTITUTION: INSTEP - WFU London

ADDRESS: 48 Russell Square
Bloomsbury
London
WC1B 4JP

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Mr Philip Davies

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 16 July 2019

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation 26 September 2019

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

The Institute of Economic and Political Studies (INSTEP/the Institution) commenced teaching students from American universities at its London site in 1979 and at its Cambridge site in 1986. In the summer of 2017, INSTEP became a wholly owned subsidiary of Wake Forest University (WFU), which is based in North Carolina, United States of America (USA). This resulted in a name change to INSTEP-WFU.

The London site, which is the United Kingdom (UK) registered office, is located in central London. In May 2019 the London office moved its location, from the St Nicholas Training Centre for the Montessori Method of Education in Marlborough Place to premises in Russell Square, still in the centre of London. The classrooms have also been relocated to the Great Russell Street premises of Florida State University. The Cambridge centre is still based close to the centre of the city.

INSTEP-WFU works with a consortium of American universities, alongside Wake Forest University, to provide second and third year undergraduates with the opportunity to spend one or two semesters studying in London and Cambridge. This reflects the practice of many UK and American universities in offering credit rated study abroad opportunities at overseas universities. The aim of such programmes is to broaden the experience for participants in respect of their academic courses as they are exposed to experiences that would not normally be on offer in their home universities. The programmes also permit students to experience different cultural environments.

INSTEP-WFU has five directors including two UK resident directors in London and Cambridge, both of whom report directly to the Program Director at Wake Forest University.

2. Brief description of the current provision

INSTEP-WFU delivers semester programmes. These offer a cross disciplinary approach in which central themes are examined from the areas of economics, business, finance, political economy, international relations, politics, law, history, English literature, and communications. The London centre's courses include the Middle East and Political Islam, Law and Society, The New Europe, and Contemporary Britain. The Cambridge centre courses include Economic Theory: the Cambridge tradition, Geopolitics in the Twenty-first Century and the Theory of Finance.

In recent years approximately 30 students have participated in courses each year. At the time of the inspection there were no programmes running.

The courses are taught by academics from Cambridge University and a number of London universities. The academics have significant research and publication profiles.

To be eligible to participate in the study abroad programme, students must normally have a grade point average of 3.0 or above. Grade point average is the mean average of the grades for all courses previously studied on a scale of one to four. Students must enrol for five courses, each of which carries three credits. Students therefore receive a maximum of fifteen credits on successful completion of their studies. These credits are confirmed through Wake Forest University and contribute towards their overall degree classification in their home university. Teaching is normally provided in small groups.

There are approximately ten American universities that are members of the INSTEP-WFU affiliate group including Tulane and Arizona State. All students on INSTEP programmes are second or third-year undergraduates aged 20 or over. Each of the UK centres caters for a relatively small number of students.

Students can apply throughout the calendar year for admission to the autumn and spring semesters. The closing date for acceptance for admission is approximately three months prior to the semester commencement date.

3. Inspection process

One inspector undertook the inspection at the London Centre over half a day. The inspection involved interviews with the London Centre Director and the manager responsible for the new teaching space. The inspector reviewed various documents and undertook a tour of the Florida State University classroom and library facilities in Great Russell Street and the office facilities in Russell Square.

4. Background to the supplementary inspection

This supplementary inspection was required to review the new premises. The London office has moved location, from the St Nicholas Training Centre for the Montessori Method of Education in Marlborough Place to premises in Russell Square in central London. The classrooms are now located in the Florida State University accommodation in Great Russell Street.

5. Inspection history

Inspection Type	Date
Full Accreditation	17-18 November 2008
Supplementary	28 May 2009
Interim	24 March 2010
Re-accreditation	12 & 29 November 2012
Interim	29 January 2015
Re-accreditation	19 & 26 October 2016
Interim	1 February 2018
Supplementary	1 June 2018

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgments and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.

1. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

1.1 Premises, Facilities and Learning Resources (full inspection)

The numbers below refer to the standards as presented in the Independent Higher Education scheme document and main full inspection report

20. The institution has secure possession of and access to its premises

20.1	The institution has secure tenure on its premises.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
20.2	The institution has the legal right to use these premises for the delivery of higher education.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
20.3	Where required, the institution has access to suitable external premises for academic or non-academic purposes of a temporary or occasional nature.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

INSTEP-WFU has arranged a two-year lease that began in May 2019 for the office space it uses.

In addition, INSTEP-WFU has a formal agreement secured with the Florida State University to use its accommodation in Great Russell Street. This provides classroom space, a relaxation area, a library and Information Technology (IT) rooms.

Also, INSTEP-WFU has an agreement with the University of London for its students to provide them with access to the University of London Senate Library and to the student support facilities available at Student Central.

21. The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for students and staff

21.1	Access to the premises is appropriately restricted and secured.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
21.2	The premises are maintained in an adequate state of repair, decoration and cleanliness.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
21.3	There are specific safety rules in areas of particular hazard (e.g. science laboratories) which are brought to the attention of students, staff and visitors.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA
21.4	General guidance on health and safety is made available to students, staff and visitors.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
21.5	There is adequate signage inside and outside the premises and general information is displayed effectively.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
21.6	There is adequate circulation space for the number of students and staff accommodated and a suitable area in which to receive visitors.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
21.7	There are toilet and hand-washing facilities of an appropriate number and acceptable level of cleanliness.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
21.8	There is adequate air conditioning, heating and ventilation in all rooms.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

Access from the street to the office space in Russell Square and at the Florida State University accommodation in Great Russell Street is controlled through locked doors with an intercom and camera system. This is effective and secure.

The accommodation in both venues is of a high quality, clean and well maintained. It is spacious and well ventilated. This includes the toilet facilities.

There are no specialist facilities with particular hazards, as these are not required by the curriculum offered.

The staff at the Florida State University building manage health and safety arrangements effectively.

Emergency fire exit routes are signposted throughout the buildings used and there are reception areas where visitors sign in and are provided with any necessary safety information. Signage is appropriate.

22. Classrooms and other learning areas are appropriate for the programmes offered

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|------|--|---|-----------------------------|--|
| 22.1 | Classrooms and other learning areas provide adequate accommodation in size and number for the classes (e.g. lectures, seminars, tutorials) allocated to them. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 22.2 | Classrooms and/or any specialised learning areas (e.g. laboratories, clinics, workshops, studios) are equipped to a level which allows for the effective delivery of each programme. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 22.3 | There are facilities suitable for conducting assessments such as examinations. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

The classrooms are spacious for the small number of students anticipated. Classrooms are well equipped. They have multi-media projectors with a computer for the use of the lecturer. There is also a large whiteboard in each classroom. All classrooms have wireless connectivity access for students' use.

Assessment is undertaken through coursework with no examinations.

23. There are appropriate additional facilities for students and staff

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|------|--|---|-----------------------------|--|
| 23.1 | Students have access to sufficient space and suitable facilities for private individual study and group work. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 23.2 | Academic staff have access to sufficient personal space for preparing lessons, marking work and consultations with students. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 23.3 | Students and staff have access to space and facilities suitable for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink where appropriate. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 23.4 | Students and staff have access to secure storage for personal possessions where appropriate. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 23.5 | There are individual offices or rooms, in which academic staff and senior management can hold private meetings and a room of sufficient size to hold staff meetings. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 23.6 | Administrative offices are adequate in size and suitably resourced for the effective administration of the institution. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Students have good access to a library and open access IT rooms where private study and research can be undertaken. Students also have access to the Senate House library providing further private study space.

Staff generally undertake course preparation in their own time away from the teaching locations either in their offices at their primary employer or at home. Nevertheless, appropriate office space, IT and print or copy facilities are available as required that meet staff needs.

A lounge is available for relaxation in the Florida State University site for use by staff and students. In addition, students have access to Student Central, which provides leisure facilities including a gymnasium and swimming pool.

Storage space is not required as staff and students keep their belongings with them.

The Director has an office in the building in Russell Square that is appropriate and provides adequate space for the work required and storage of essential materials such as the course texts that are given to the students. This space can be used for private meetings as required and additional rooms are available for booking for private meetings that involve larger groups of people.

24. The library is appropriately stocked and provides a fit-for-purpose learning resource for the student body

24.1	There is sufficient provision of learning materials including books, journals and periodicals and online materials.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
24.2	There are clear, systematic and effective means of ensuring the adequacy and currency of library stock to reflect staff and student needs.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
24.3	The library has sufficient space for student independent study and group working.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA
24.4	There is a well-organised lending policy.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
24.5	The library is adequately staffed with appropriately qualified and experienced staff.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA
24.6	Library opening times are sufficient to encourage and support students' independent learning.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

INSTEP-WFU provides the required key texts to the students.

Students have very good access to library facilities and space for independent study and group working.

A significant 10,000 text library is available for students at the Florida State University premises in Great Russell Street. This is well organised. There is space, adjacent to the library, for student independent study and this includes open access IT. The open access IT facilities for private study are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In addition, INSTEP-WFU has secured access to the large University of London Senate Library managed by appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

Both libraries have generous opening times including Saturdays.

25. The information technology resources are well managed, effective and provide a fit-for-purpose learning resource for the student body

25.1	There is appropriate technological access and sufficient connectivity to enable students to study flexibly.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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25.2	Students have effective online resources that assist with their learning, optimise interaction between the institution and the student and enhance instructional and educational services.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
25.3	There is provision of appropriate, up-to-date software and virtual learning environments which reflect the needs of the programmes.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
25.4	There is an effective means of ensuring the renewal of hardware and software to ensure efficiency and currency.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
25.5	The institution has access to the services of an experienced Information Technology (IT) technician who can ensure that systems are operative at all times and provide support to students, academic staff, and students and staff working remotely.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
25.6	The institution makes effective provision for students to access conventional and online resources.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Students have good access to IT resources. All teaching spaces have wireless access.

Students also have access to the two air-conditioned IT rooms 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

All students have access to their American home university's online resources to support their studies.

Many students benefit from the technical support that is provided by the home university for mobile devices used away from the university.

The IT resources at the Florida State University site are well maintained and kept up to date by the two experienced IT technicians. The technicians are also available to offer support and advice to students.

1.2 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

The Institution provides students with access to good classroom space, a relaxation area, the University of London Senate House library and access to IT rooms for students to conduct private study and research.

Students have access to good student support facilities available at Student Central.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

High

Medium

Low

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT *(to be reviewed at the next inspection)*

None

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE